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Lutheran boys shut down South Beloit

Rockford Register Star

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Local steel company sold

BRAD BURT/Rockford Register Star

Liebovich Brothers Inc., 2116 Preston St., has been sold to California-based Reliance Steel & Aluminum Co. The move represents the loss of a second local corporate headquarters this week; Sundstrand Corp. was bought Monday.

Liebovich president foresees 'no jobs lost'

By BRIAN LEAF and GEORGETTE BRAUN
Rockford Register Star

ROCKFORD — Liebovich Brothers Inc., a 60-year-old family-owned steel service center, has been sold to Reliance Steel & Aluminum of Los Angeles.

Terms of the deal for Liebovich, which last year had sales of $130 million, were not disclosed. The deal is expected to be completed before March 31.

The sale to Reliance represents the loss of a second local corporate headquarters this week. Monday, United Technologies said it would buy Sundstrand Corp. for $4.3 billion in a move that will cost some of the 107 management jobs at Rockford's largest manufacturing employer.

Liebovich employs 350 people locally and 50 in Grand Rapids, Mich.

Liebovich president Gregg Liebovich said his company's management team and work force will remain intact.

"There will be no jobs lost," said Liebovich. "In fact, if we can continue to grow the company, we will be adding jobs."

The company started in 1939 when brothers Albert and Carl Liebovich opened a scrap yard on Kishwaukee Street. Joseph Liebovich joined them in 1947, and they took the name Liebovich Brothers.

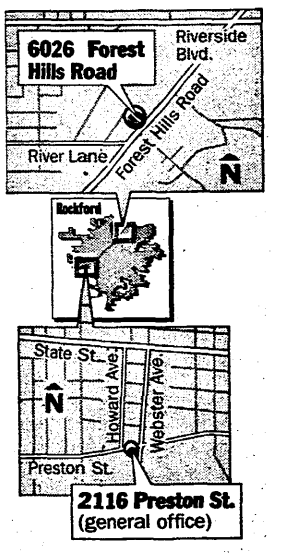
Today, the company sells and fabricates steel for makers of machine tools, automobiles, agricultural equipment, appliances and other durable goods.

Liebovich said Reliance's

Please see Steel, 7A▷

■ Sterling steel mill plans revival, 1B

Liebovich locations



Nonpublic pupils get millions in state funds

■ For transport, books: Gov. Ryan's tuition credit plan wouldn't be the first program to benefit families using private schools.

The Associated Press

SPRINGFIELD — Lori Bartletti made sure her minivan was first in line Tuesday to pick up her daughters from Little Flower Elementary School.

"They hate it when I'm way back in the line," said Bartletti, who got a little tip for her chauffeuring last week — a $199.80 check from the state.

Illinois taxpayers contribute to Bartletti's annual transportation expenses because she doesn't live on a school bus route, even though fifth-grader Sara and second-grader Andri attend a Catholic school.

It's just one example of how the state subsidizes private-school parents.

Gov. George Ryan has proposed another such benefit — a tuition tax-credit plan that could cost $100 million and which critics have derided as unconstitutional.

But arguing tax credits violate the separation of church and state falls flat when Illinois already has programs such as the transportation reimbursement, said Joan McKinney of the Catholic Conference of Illinois.

This year, the state will send $10.1 million to parents who aren't on a school bus route. The program benefits the parents of roughly 23,000 public school students and 76,500 nonpublic school students.

A $24 million grant to help both private and public schools buy books and software this year gives schools $26.57 per student. Of 907,400 students benefiting, 132,200 are in private schools.

Hundreds of millions of dollars more pour into the education of private-school children through various federal Title I programs.

L.E. BASKOW/Rockford Register Star

Maria Martinez adjusts the headpiece Saturday on a mannequin at Maria's Bridal Shop in Victorian Village. Martinez, who owns the shop, sells wedding dresses and other custom clothing.

Victorian Village now mostly vacancies

■ 'It was gorgeous': Only 3 businesses survive in the former tourist attraction where more than 70 once flourished.

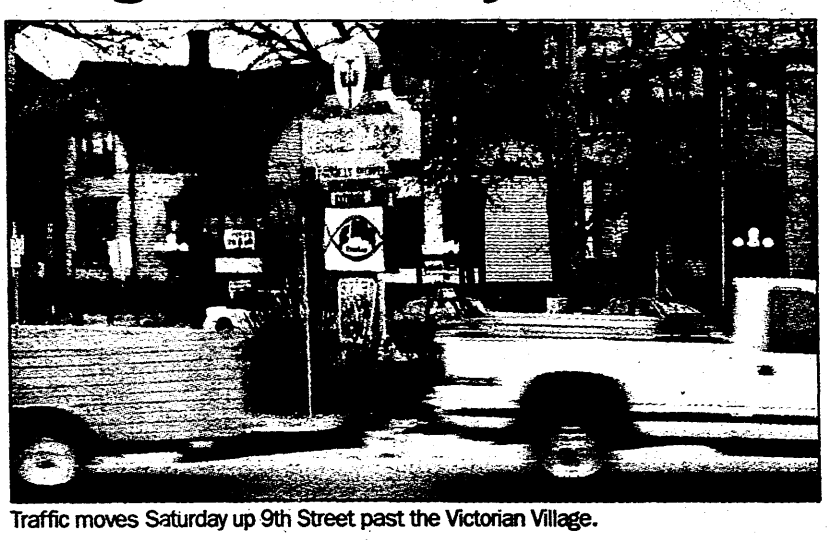
By MARK BONNE
Rockford Register Star

ROCKFORD — From the window of his second-floor office at Sundberg Funeral Home, George Matsakis has watched the once vibrant Victorian Village die a slow death.

"I remember when they had carriage rides and luminaria at Christmas," Matsakis said. "Buses would unload in our parking lot. It was gorgeous. It was really lovely."

At the height of its popularity in the late 1980s, Victorian Village drew more than 5,000 people each weekend to an otherwise largely desolate downtown Rockford. More than 70 shops — many of them one-room mom-and-pop operations — filled two dozen turn-of-the-century homes in a triangle formed by Sixth, Ninth and East State streets.

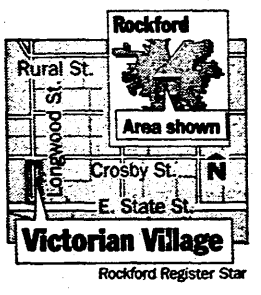
Last week, Jensen Flowers moved across town, leaving behind three surviving businesses among rows of weather-beaten signs and vacant storefronts.



Traffic moves Saturday up 9th Street past the Victorian Village.

The collapse of Victorian Village comes as the rest of downtown shows signs of rebound as a cultural center. Renovation of the Coronado Theatre tops a growing list of multimillion-dollar projects likely to fortify the brigade of small galleries, antique stores and upscale

Please see Village, 9A▷



Rockford Register Star

Buyout alters Sundstrand's stock appeal

■ Less volatile? As part of United Technologies, the company gains a higher profile and more diversification.

By GEORGETTE BRAUN
Rockford Register Star

ROCKFORD — Investors in Sundstrand Corp., whose stock tended to ride the aerospace industry's cyclical winds, soon will be owners of a company that more closely reflects the fortunes of the overall stock market.

United Technologies Corp., which Monday confirmed it plans to buy Sundstrand, is a diversified, blue-chip company more closely followed by analysts because it's one of the 30 big stocks in the Dow Jones industrial average. Sundstrand is Rockford's largest manufacturing employer, with about 3,500 workers, many of whom own stock in the company through 401(k) retirement plans.

United Technologies will pay $35 in cash plus 0.279 share of its stock for each share of Sundstrand's stock in a deal expected to be completed midyear.

United Technologies' higher profile can translate into bigger gains for stockholders. Sundstrand has nine industry analysts tracking its stock; United Technologies has 18.

Money managers for big mutual funds might see more reports crossing their desks, causing them to pay more attention to closely watched stocks, said Judy Toppe, investment representative for Edward Jones Co., Rockford.

Judy Toppe

"But I must say, a lot of mutual fund managers seek out small companies that are under a rock," Toppe said.

United Technologies, No. 41 on the Fortune 500 list, also is not as reliant on the aerospace industry as Sundstrand.

There's a potential benefit for shareholders because United Technologies is more diversified, Toppe said.

United Technologies not only makes parts for airplanes but also builds elevators and air conditioners. Its sales were $25.7 billion last year.

About 60 percent of Sundstrand's $2 billion in annual sales came from its aerospace

See Sundstrand, 9A▷

Chicago mayor race landslide for Daley

The Associated Press

CHICAGO — Mayor Richard M. Daley overwhelmed challenger Bobby Rush as Chicago voters Tuesday chose a Daley to head the city for the 10th time in half a century.

Richard Daley

Daley, 56, best-known for his drive to upgrade Chicago schools — once described as the nation's worst — and sweeping efforts to give the city a face lift, also benefited from the strength of a booming local economy.

Bobby Rush

Rush, 52, a four-term congressman who was a Black Panther leader in the 1960s, had trailed in polls and fund raising throughout the race. He has represented a predominantly black, South Side district, and served as a Chicago alderman before going to Capitol Hill.

With 55 percent of precincts reporting, Daley had 235,049 votes, or 75 percent, and Rush had 76,336 votes, or 25 percent.

Tuesday's election was a nonpartisan primary, with a runoff needed in April only if neither candidate received more than 50 percent of the vote.

Daley's father, Richard J. Daley, won six terms as mayor, served for 21 years and was boss of the Chicago Machine in its twilight era.

The younger Daley was elected in 1989 to serve two years remaining in the term of the late Harold Washington, the city's first black mayor, and was re-elected in 1991 and 1995.

Elsewhere on the ballot, Chicago Treasurer Miriam Santos built a strong lead despite a federal indictment charging that she schemed to extort campaign funds from city contractors.

Ross Byrd (left) and Renee Mullins, children of James Byrd Jr., leave the Jasper County Courthouse after John William King was convicted of murder Tuesday.

The Associated Press

Man convicted in Texas dragging death

The Associated Press

JASPER, Texas — A white supremacist was convicted of murder Tuesday and could get the death penalty for chaining a black man to a pickup truck and dragging him until his body was torn to pieces in a crime that shocked the nation.

The jury of 11 whites and one black took less than 2½ hours to reach a verdict against John William King in the slaying last June of James Byrd Jr.

Courtroom spectators applauded, and the victim's relatives broke into tears.

The jury then began hearing evidence on whether the 24-year-old laborer should get the death penalty or life in prison for one of the grisliest racial crimes in the United States since the civil rights era.

"I am relieved," said Stella Brumley, Byrd's sister. "That's all we wanted, was justice."

King was the first of three white men to go on trial in the slaying, which prosecutors said he carried out because he wanted "something dramatic" to gain credibility for a racist group he was organizing.

"I hope he receives life without parole," the Rev. Jesse Jackson said from New York. "If these three men saw killing as a solution in their sick state, then we in our sober and sane state must know killing is not a solution."

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2000 COUNTDOWN

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